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Crime prevention and criminal justice

Note verbale dated 21 April 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to request the issuance of the attached joint letter dated 2 April 2009 from the Permanent Representatives of Bahrain, Belarus, Egypt, Nicaragua and the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 97 (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 21 April 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Since the General Assembly, in its resolution 63/194, entitled "Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons" invited all Member States to accelerate the consideration of the advisability of a global plan of action on preventing trafficking in persons, prosecuting traffickers, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking, we believe it is important to address you today on this important issue.

The need for a global plan of action that ensures a collective, comprehensive and coordinated approach towards combating trafficking in persons was emphasized during the thematic debate of the General Assembly on trafficking in persons on 3 June 2008. It has also been a demand advocated by several prominent intergovernmental organizations. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union was a pioneer among intergovernmental bodies in devoting a unanimous decision in this regard during its eleventh summit meeting in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 30 June 2008, as was the Non-Aligned Movement, which gave a clear signal on the importance of the consideration of the matter in its final document adopted at its fifteenth ministerial conference in Tehran on 29 and 30 July 2008.

The need for initiating consultations in the General Assembly on the global plan of action has not been exclusive to one regional group; it was a request by many countries from different regional groups of the United Nations, based on the need to build on existing regional plans of action and to enhance the legal process established by the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary protocol on trafficking in persons.

The Secretary-General was requested by the General Assembly in the above resolution, to prepare, by 1 June 2009, a background paper on how to achieve the full and effective coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons and to ensure the full and effective implementation of all relevant legal instruments. After the background paper is prepared, we believe it will be appropriate to start informal consultations or debate under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly on the issue of the advisability of adopting a United Nations global plan of action and on how to collectively put an end to trafficking in persons as a social and economic phenomenon, which violates all the basic norms, rights and fundamental freedoms of human beings. The debate should be based on the Secretary-General's background paper to be prepared in accordance with resolution 63/194.

We see this debate as a forum for Member States to discuss the issues from all angles and seek a proper way forward on how to work together towards the full elimination of the scourge. In so doing, it is vital that we hear the voices of all interested parties: Member States, the relevant United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes and other international agencies and non-governmental organizations. It could be conceived as a two-day event starting with a meeting of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons at United Nations Headquarters in New York, to be followed by a debate of the General Assembly. Member States will be interested to hear and discuss the position of the

Inter-Agency Group on this urgent issue with a view to a possible adoption of the global action plan at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

We hope you will give this proposal your favourable consideration and support, and request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Tawfeeq Ahmed **Almansoor**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Andrei **Dapkiunas**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Maged A. **Abdelaziz**
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Maria **Rubiales de Chamorro**
Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Hilario G. **Davide**, Jr.
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines
to the United Nations